THE IDEA OF A CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY: NEWMAN ON THE ROLE OF THEOLOGY IN A LIBERAL EDUCATION

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In the Discourses that make up his *Idea of a University*, Cardinal Newman set out to show the Irish of his day and especially the laity of Dublin that they should support the decision of the Church to establish a Catholic university in Dublin. To accomplish this, Newman needed to persuade his listeners of the compatibility of a liberal education and a Catholic education. Whatever we may make of the troubled life of the institution established with Newman as its first Rector in 1851, Newman seems to have succeeded at least in establishing that compatibility in the minds of his listeners and most subsequent readers of the published version of his Discourses. The *Idea of a University* is commonly cited as a defense of Catholic education and as an eloquent and important statement of the aim and worth of liberal education. Newman argues at length that theology must be included within any university deserving that designation and he furnishes the best known and perhaps best loved English-language account of liberal education as knowledge pursued for its own sake. Yet, if for Newman and his admirers there appears to be a very close relationship between the two aims of furnishing a Catholic education and a liberal one, questions arise when we try to articulate the precise nature of this relationship. At times, Newman appears to suggest that a liberal education properly understood and successfully pursued will be a Catholic education: "Right Reason, that is, Reason rightly exercised, leads the mind to the Catholic Faith." (137)[1] Indeed, he will later conclude, in the Ninth Discourse, that

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[1] All references in this essay, unless otherwise identified, are taken from John Henry

"a University cannot exist externally to the Catholic pale, for it cannot teach universal knowledge if it does not teach Catholic theology." (163) On the other hand, Newman also points out that the liberally educated mind "has what may be considered a religion of its own, independent of Catholicism, partly co-operating with it, partly thwarting it." (137) "Liberal education makes not the Christian, not the Catholic, but the gentleman." (91) Although Newman insists in principle and repeatedly upon the compatibility of a liberal and a Catholic education, it remains unclear how the two can be practically combined in a Catholic university. How, and how far, can the aim of providing a liberal education be made to coincide with the aim of furnishing a Catholic education?

Newman seems to identify two distinct ways in which a university can be made to be Catholic. In discussing the relation between theology and the secular disciplines in Discourses II-IV, Newman argues for the inclusion of theology in the university curriculum not only because theology is *a* branch of knowledge, i.e., one branch among many, but also because theology is the highest science, a science which exerts a powerful influence upon all the other sciences. One way in which the university could be made Catholic, then, would be through the rule of theology as queen of the sciences, the science which governs all of the other disciplines and directs them to a single end. When we reach the Ninth Discourse, however, we learn that the inclusion of Catholic theology within the university curriculum is not sufficient to guarantee its Catholicity. Something more is required to insure that the "spirit" of the university be Catholic. The Spanish Inquisition, Newman argues, was an institution that was "materially" Catholic, but its "spirit and form were earthly and secular." (164) Though the individuals engaged in the Inquisition were almost entirely Catholic and subscribed to orthodox Catholic teaching, the aim of that institution for which it was created by the Spanish state in its political struggle with the papacy was ultimately decisive. Similarly, even a university that includes Catholic theology is going to be decisively shaped by its own "natural" end; it is still in need of the "pure and unearthly spirit" of the Church to insure its Catholicity:

> It is no sufficient security for the Catholicity of a University, even that the whole of Catholic theology should be professed in it, unless the Church breathes her own pure and unearthly spirit into it, and fashions and moulds its organization, and watches over its teaching, and knits together its pupils, and superintends its action. (164)

The bulk of the Ninth Discourse—the last of those included in the original publication of Newman's lectures—is meant to establish the need for something more

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Newman, *The Idea of a University*, ed. Martin J. Svaglic (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982), and appear in parentheses.

than the mere inclusion of Catholic theology within the university curriculum. What is needed, in some sense, is an extracurricular—or rather a super-curricular—infusion of the Holy Spirit to guarantee the Catholicity of the university. This addition to the argument appears, at first, unproblematic. Newman seems simply to be saying that the other-worldly spirit of the Church is needed to aid or supplement the role of theology as queen of the sciences. As the argument in Discourse IX unfolds, however, it begins to look as if theology is incapable of functioning as the ruling science, that there is an essential, or at least unavoidable, conflict between liberal education and Catholic education. This leaves the reader wondering whether the idea of a Catholic university is just that, an idea that can never have practical expression, or whether the other-worldly spirit of the Church whose need Newman acknowledges in the Ninth Discourse might enable theology to play its role as queen of the sciences in spite of what appear to be insurmountable difficulties.

Liberal Education and Catholic Education

Newman begins his Preface to the *Idea of a University* by articulating what he understands to be the nature of a university:

> The view taken of a University in these Discourses is the following:—That it is a place of *teaching* universal *knowledge*. This implies that its object is, on the one hand, intellectual, not moral; and, on the other, that it is the diffusion and extension of knowledge rather than the advancement. If its object were scientific and philosophical discovery, I do not see why a University should have students; if religious training, I do not see how it can be the seat of literature and science. (xxxvii)

The university, according to Newman, is a place of teaching, not scientific research or philosophical discovery. And its object is the cultivation of the mind, not the training of the will. In the remainder of the Preface Newman goes on to show how these two features of a university, that it is a place of teaching and that its object is knowledge, are of particular interest to the Church.

In recommending the establishment of a Catholic university in Ireland, Newman points out that the Holy See is not interested in science and literature as such. (Indeed, as we shall see when we discuss Discourse IX, science and literature prove to be particularly hostile to revealed truth.) What does interest the Vicar of Christ is rather the education of those young Catholics who are to be *taught* science and literature. And he is concerned with the education of those students because he is convinced that their education will further the interests of revealed truth: "He rejoices in the widest and most philosophical systems of intellectual education, from an intimate conviction that Truth is his real ally, as it is his profession; and that Knowledge and Reason are sure ministers to Faith."

(xxxviii) Newman goes on to point out that the Church's interest in founding a university does not pervert the nature of the university since the proper end of a university is the education of its students not the advancement of science or philosophical inquiry. Indeed, Newman argues that there exist other institutions better suited to this latter task, namely literary and scientific academies, e.g., the "Royal Society." The object of the academy is the advancement of knowledge; that of the university, its diffusion. Newman's emphasis upon the university as a place where students are taught, rather than research conducted, reveals an initial point of intersection between the interests of the Church and the aim of a university.

Why does the Church wish the young who are its concern to receive a university education? To answer this question, Newman appeals to the second aspect of a university, that it has knowledge as its object. Newman denies that the Church wants to establish a university in Ireland because it means to encourage the production of the "gentleman." Although that kind of human being is in fact the typical result of a liberal education , as Newman will acknowledge in the Eighth Discourse, he is only an unintended by-product of what the Church does aim at. The proper aim of a university—and what the Church desires—is rather the cultivation of the intellect; it seeks to cultivate "the force, the steadiness, the comprehensiveness and the versatility of intellect, the command over our own powers, the instinctive just estimate of things as they pass before us, which sometimes indeed is a natural gift, but commonly is not gained without much effort and the exercise of years." (xlii) Untutored minds, according to Newman, "have no principles laid down within them as a foundation for the intellect to build upon; they have no discriminating convictions, and no grasp of consequences." (xlii-iii) Consequently, they "have no difficulty in contradicting themselves in successive sentences, without being conscious of it." (xliii) When sufficiently trained by a university education, however, the mind is able to think clearly and consistently and acquires the faculty of "entering with comparative ease into any subject of thought, and of taking up with aptitude any science or profession." (xliv) If what the Church seeks here is to give Catholics access to an intellectual good from which they have previously been barred by discriminatory laws and practices, this is not all that it seeks in promoting this good. The Church means not only to equip men for the world in matters that are worldly. It means also to make the students of its universities competent defenders of the faith:

> Men who fancy they see what is not are more energetic, and make their way better, than those who see nothing; and so the undoubting infidel, the fanatic, the heresiarch, are able to do much, while the mere hereditary Christian, who has never realized the truths which he holds, is unable to do any thing. But, if consistency of view can add

> so much strength even to error, what may it not be expected to furnish to the dignity, the energy, and the influence of Truth! (xliv)

In the highest instance, the Church founds universities so that those within her fold may come to know and understand the Truth, to grasp its inner coherence and consistency, to defend it against its enemies, and to pass it on to those who are willing to receive it. In short, the Church founds universities in order that the faithful may be prepared "to give an account of the hope that is in [them]." (1 Peter 3:15)

In his Preface Newman makes clear that in itself the nature of a university differs from the mission of the Church. The university is concerned with teaching knowledge, not moral and religious training. And while the Church is surely concerned with knowledge of the faith and of its articulation, namely theology, it has, as we have noted, no *per se* and direct interest in science and literature. But the Church does take an interest in the product of a university education: the student who acquires universal knowledge—of which science and literature form a part—possesses the intellectual habits that enable him to think and to speak with clarity and consistency. While the Church can surely provide its members with a rudimentary knowledge of the faith by means of the catechism and the pulpit, the university appears to be the only ordinary means of educating believers who are capable of thinking clearly and speaking eloquently about the faith. In some sense, then, a Catholic education must be a liberal education.

We have discussed why Newman believes that a Catholic education must be a liberal education, but we have yet to see why a liberal education must be Catholic. This latter point is addressed, albeit briefly, near the beginning of Newman's Preface. Having defined a university as "a place of teaching universal knowledge," Newman notes in passing that a university *in theory* can be understood independently of the Catholic Church, but *in practice* it requires the aid and support of the Church:

> Such is a University in its *essence*, and independently of its relation to the Church. But, practically speaking, it cannot fulfil its object duly, such as I have described it, without the Church's assistance; or, to use the theological term, the Church is necessary for its *integrity*. Not that its main characters are changed by this incorporation: it still has the office of intellectual education; but the Church steadies it in the performance of that office. (xxxvii)

Newman does not explain in the Preface why the Church is necessary for the integrity of the university, but his remarks seem to refer, in the first instance, to his argument in Discourses II-IV that a university cannot teach universal knowledge unless it includes theology.

Theology as Queen of the Sciences

In Newman's Second Discourse—*Theology a Branch of Knowledge*—he argues for the inclusion of theology not only on the grounds that theology should not be excluded because it is *a* branch of knowledge, but because in some manner it comprehends all of the other disciplines:

> Admit a God, and you introduce among the subjects of your knowledge a fact encompassing, closing in upon, absorbing, every other fact conceivable. How can we investigate any part of any order of Knowledge, and stop short of that which enters into every order? All true principles run over with it, all phenomena converge to it; it is truly the First and the Last. In word indeed, and in idea, it is easy enough to divide Knowledge into human and divine, secular and religious, and to lay down that we will address ourselves to the one without interfering with the other; but it is impossible in fact. (19)

As Newman makes clear in this passage, all other disciplines are comprehended by theology since its object of study, God, comprehends every other object of study; it "enters into every order." Moreover, Newman seems to imply that all the other disciplines are ordered or directed towards theology—all phenomena converge to it. The notion of a university as a place of universal knowledge may only be slightly affected if it excludes, for example, economics, but to exclude that science which is the highest and proffers the most important truths will, in practice, utterly undermine the attempt to teach *universal* knowledge.

That God is the ultimate source of unity among the sciences is further explained in the Third Discourse—*Bearing of Theology on Other Branches of Knowledge*. According to Newman, the various sciences "all taken together form one integral subject for contemplation, so there are no natural or real limits between part and part; one is ever running into another." (34) The common subject matter of the various sciences, however, derives its unity from God since the contemplation of the world, in some manner, ends in the contemplation of God as its ultimate source:

> All knowledge forms one whole, because its subject-matter is one; for the universe in its length and breadth is so intimately knit together, that we cannot separate off portion from portion, and operation from operation, except by a mental abstraction; and then again, as to its Creator, though He of course in His own Being is infinitely separate from it, and Theology has its departments towards which human knowledge has no relations, yet He has so implicated Himself with it, and taken it into His very bosom, by His presence in it, His providence over it, His impressions upon it, and His influences through it; that we cannot truly or fully contemplate it without in some main aspects contemplating Him. (38)

All of the sciences, then, can be said to investigate God since they either study God directly, as theology does, or they contemplate the world which, as Newman

points out, cannot be "truly and fully" contemplated without contemplating Him who is present in it, provident over it, and impressed upon it.

Having justified theology's inclusion in the curriculum by virtue of its object of study, which in some manner comprehends all things, Newman goes on to speak about the hierarchical structure of the sciences. The sciences, according to Newman, are related to one another the way that the art of bridle-making is subordinate to the art of strategy. Thus, although all the sciences can be said to "converge and contribute" to a single mass of knowledge, they do not all make an equal contribution since the knowledge of a higher discipline contributes more to our understanding of the truth than a lower discipline. The implication is clear: if the unity of the sciences has its source in God, then theology is obviously the highest, the science which comprehends all the other sciences the way that the science of strategy comprehends the art of bridle-making. According to Newman, then, theology comprehends all the other disciplines and it thereby enters into every order. And he goes on to point out that theology's doctrine of a particular providence cannot fail "to exert a powerful influence on philosophy, literature, and every intellectual creation or discovery whatever." "What science," he asks, "will not find one part or other of its province traversed by its path? [...]. Does it cast no light upon history? has it no influence upon the principles of ethics? is it without any sort of bearing on physics, metaphysics, and political science?" (50) Given the influence of theology on the other sciences, then, it appears to be impossible to exclude theology without thereby damaging all of the others: "Religious Truth is not only a portion, but a condition of general knowledge. To blot it out is nothing short, if I may so speak, of unraveling the web of University Teaching." (52-3)

Nor is the damage done to the university curriculum by the absence of theology merely that it will deprive the other sciences of that science which sheds light on all the rest. In his Fourth Discourse, Newman identifies another important way in which the exclusion of theology will jeopardize the integrity of university teaching. The other disciplines will not only remain incomplete without theology; they will become distorted or perverted: "if you drop any science out of the circle of knowledge, you cannot keep its place vacant for it; that science is forgotten; the other sciences close up, or, in other words, they exceed their proper bounds, and intrude where they have no right." (55) The exclusion of theology not only deprives the other sciences of the light which theology sheds upon all of the other disciplines, it also removes the barriers or limits which keep in check the tendency of each science to make claims beyond the scope of its own discipline. Newman notes in particular the tendency of the inferior sciences to make assertions which intrude upon the territory of a higher science. Newman speaks about

the political economist who claims that the science of acquiring wealth is the key to moral progress. The difficulty in this case is not only that the economist is making claims that go beyond his own discipline, but that he is making assertions which surpass his own competence. The claim that the acquisition of wealth is the key to happiness can only be evaluated, according to Newman, by appealing to a *higher* tribunal.[2] Although the economist surpasses the scope of his own science, Newman seems to assert that the proper limits of an inferior science must

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[2] When Newman speaks about the economist who exceeds his proper bounds by claiming the acquisition of wealth is the key to moral progress, he indicates that the question pertains partly to the authority of philosophy as the science of sciences, but also to the theologian as the highest of the particular sciences:

> The objection that Political Economy is inferior to the science of virtue, or does not conduce to happiness, is an ethical or theological objection; the question of its "rank" belongs to the Architectonic Science or Philosophy, whatever it be, which is itself the arbiter of all truth, and which disposes of the claims and arranges the places of all the departments of knowledge which man is able to master. I say, when an opponent of a particular science asserts that it does not conduce to happiness ... the obvious question which occurs to me to ask is, what does Religion, what does Revelation, say on the point? Political Economy must not be allowed to give judgment in its own favour, but must come before a higher tribunal. The objection is an appeal to the Theologian; however, the Professor [of political economy] does not so view the matter; he does not consider it a question for Philosophy. (68)

This passage is difficult to interpret because Newman seems to blur the distinction between theology and philosophy, but to the extent that Newman treats them as distinct sciences, he seems to be saying something like the following: The objection against the claims of the political economist is raised by the theologian. Philosophy determines that the matter in question belongs by right to the theologian and he therefore subjects the claims of the political economist to the authority of theology. Philosophy, then, does not raise the original objection against the economist or render final judgment. The rule of philosophy over the other sciences, then, seems to be largely procedural: philosophy knows the territory occupied by the various disciplines, the order of rank among them, and knows when to defer to each of them regarding a specific question under dispute. This limited procedural authority, however, does not call into question the rule of theology as the queen of the sciences. Indeed, in his essay *Christianity and Scientific Investigation* Newman describes the authority of philosophy in a manner which makes explicit its procedural nature. He asserts that philosophy is "ancillary" to theology, "but in the same way that one of the Queen's judges is an officer of the Queen's, and nevertheless determines certain legal proceedings between the Queen and her subjects." (345) Philosophy has authority over all of the other sciences, but only in a limited respect. Its authority is limited primarily to the arbitration of disputes between the various disciplines. Its authority is more judicial in nature than it is legislative or executive.

necessarily be determined and enforced from without: "if there is a science of wealth, it must give rules for gaining wealth and disposing of wealth, and can do nothing more; it cannot itself declare that it is a subordinate science, that its end is not the ultimate end of all things, and that its conclusions are only hypothetical, depending upon its premisses, and liable to be overruled by a higher teaching." (65) As the highest science, then, theology is needed to *govern* the inferior sciences, to *judge* the legitimacy of their claims, and *instruct* the lower sciences by showing them their subordinate nature. In short, the lower disciplines must be ruled by theology as queen of the sciences.

Having outlined his account of the necessity of including theology in a university curriculum in Discourses II-IV, Newman appears to broach a new subject in the Fifth Discourse where he turns to a discussion of liberal knowledge as an end in itself. The change in subject is consistent with Newman's initial plan as set out in the First Discourse: Newman has intended to address two distinct questions in his lectures: 1) whether it is consistent with the idea of a university to exclude theology from among the sciences and 2) whether it is consistent with the idea of a university that it be principally concerned with teaching the useful arts and sciences as opposed to those liberal studies with which the university has traditionally been associated. The second question occupies Newman's attention in Discourses V-VIII. Although Newman treats these four Discourses as if they were devoted to a question entirely separate from that of the place and role of theology, the view we get of the university in these Discourses does modify his previous discussion. This is especially clear in Discourse VIII where we learn of the moral effects of a liberal education. According to Newman, the very qualities by which the mind is able to order and arrange a multitude of ideas into a harmonious whole tends to produce a kind of love of the beautiful which elevates a man's speeches and deeds. Liberal education produces the "gentleman," a man who appears to possess all of the moral virtues. Despite the salutary character of the moral effects of liberal knowledge, however, Newman notes a tendency for reason to produce a religion of its own that runs counter to the moral teaching of the Church.[3] May the gentleman also be a saint? This must be at least doubtful,

[3] Among the moral effects of a liberal education that Newman highlights as the greatest aid to the Church is the fact that liberal education, by engendering a love of knowledge for its own sake, literally draws the mind away from sensual pleasures to those of the mind. The cultivation of the mind elevates the soul by substituting objects naturally noble and innocent for those which are base and corrupting. In this respect liberal education proves to be a powerful ally of the Church since it frees a man from his subjugation to the flesh: "to disentangle and to disengage its ten thousand holds upon the heart, is to bring it, I might

for in his case "conscience tends to become what is called moral sense; the command of duty is a sort of taste; sin is not an offense against God, but against human nature." (145) And yet we may still suppose that the conflict between liberal education and the Church we see manifested in the instance of the gentleman takes place not at the level of doctrine, but at that of moral practice. Thus, although the argument in the Eighth Discourse introduces a tension between the moral effects of a liberal education and Catholicism viewed "as a system of pastoral instruction and moral duty" (139), it need not call into question the role of theology as queen of the sciences as that role seems to have been established in the course of the argument for its inclusion in the University.

The Ninth Discourse

Until the Ninth Discourse, Newman's account of a university education has treated a liberal education and a Catholic education as if perfectly compatible—if not identical. The Church properly interests itself in the liberal education of those capable of it, and not only must a liberal education include theology among the branches of knowledge; those branches must defer to it as the highest science. Although our picture of the compatibility of the mission of the Church and the object of university teaching is disturbed somewhat by the discovery in the eighth Discourse that the likely result of liberal education is the gentleman whose own peculiar religion tends in a direction other than Catholicism, the notion of theology as the queen of the sciences has not been overthrown or even called into question at the level of principle. It is accordingly with some surprise or shock that we confront the far more startling picture of the conflict between a liberal and a Catholic education that Newman presents for the first time in his Ninth Discourse. Nor does it eliminate our surprise or perplexity that, just as he is about to introduce his account of this conflict, Newman congratulates himself on having completed the arduous task he had undertaken. He has, he says, done what he had intended. He has told us what a university is though not what the Church's duties to the university are or what a Catholic university might be. (162) To this he adds that he does "not like to conclude" without saying something about the Church's duties towards the University or the basis of those duties though he does not propose to speak of the Catholic university as such. (163)[4]

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almost say, half way to Heaven." (140) Newman points out, moreover, that control of our animal desires is especially important in the modern era: since men live more comfortably and have more leisure in the modern world, they are in much greater need of honorable diversions.

[4] In summarizing what he has said in his lectures as they have accomplished his purpose,

Whatever we are to make of Newman's warning that he has not given an account of the Catholic university, that warning does not prepare us for the dark, if plausible, analysis of how hostile to the revealed truth entrusted to the Church the university devoted to providing a liberal education will be. While his earlier account of the relation between theology and the other disciplines within the university curriculum indicated both the necessity and the possibility of theology functioning as a ruling science, he now questions whether this is sufficient to insure that a university will be Catholic. Even if the university teaches Catholic theology—which Newman continues to insist that it must if it is to teach universal knowledge—this is not enough "to make it a Catholic University." (163) Why not? Because theology would be there only as one of several branches of knowledge, as merely a part, even if an important part, of what Newman has "called Philosophy." What more is necessary? Or possible? Newman says that the Church must exercise "a direct and active jurisdiction [...] over it and in it [...] lest [the University] should become the rival of the Church with the community at large in those theological matters which to the Church are exclusively committed,—acting as the representative of the intellect, as the Church is the representative of the religious principle." (163) But he does not ever say explicitly that even the exercise of this jurisdiction will make the institution over which it is exercised "a Catholic University." What he says immediately is rather that the exercise of this authority is necessary to prevent the University contradicting the Church in the wider community about those theological matters whose determination belongs to the Church. To be sure, Newman also says that the subject of this ninth and last Discourse is the "illustration" of this latter proposition. But, in fact, we cannot help but notice that in the next seven sections of the ten that comprise this Discourse, Newman does not so much show how exercising the Church's authority in and over the University will make it Catholic as he reveals the deep

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Newman says that he has shown that the university must include all branches of knowledge, that these branches must be understood as making up a systematic whole, that the understanding of them in "this philosophic way" is the true culture of the intellect, that this culture is good in itself and for its secular and moral consequences, and that this culture partly coincides with and partly diverges from Christianity. He does not in this summary explicitly name theology as among the branches of knowledge that must be included by the University. He rather speaks of the inclusion of theology now as if its inclusion belongs to what he intends to add to his completed account of what a University is. Speaking apparently of the "ground" of the Church's duties towards the University he says "if the Catholic Faith is true, a University cannot exist externally to the Catholic pale, for it cannot teach Universal knowledge if it does not teach Catholic theology." (163)

roots of the hostility that makes the exercise of this authority necessary. And in the last three sections what Newman proposes is, as we shall see, rather a remedy that explicitly eschews the use of authority.

In explaining the university's hostility towards the Church, Newman repeats the claim he had made in Discourse VIII that the ethical character likely to be imprinted on the minds of the student by the university will be more or less prejudicial to the interests of the Church. In the Eighth Discourse, however, Newman had accompanied his account of this tendency with a critique of that human character for whom moral taste and self-respect have become the alternative to conscience. However likely that tendency we can still regard it as a more or less avoidable distortion or corruption of university education. What we learn in the Ninth Discourse is that this tendency is a necessary one inseparable from the very end and circumstances of university teaching. As "Academical Institutions," universities are in their nature directed to social, national, and temporal objects that are not the Church's. But more than this, if they deserve to be called universities at all, they will "of necessity have some one formal, and definite ethical character, good or bad," which they will "of necessity" imprint upon the characters of those "individuals who direct and [...] frequent them." (164) If "left to themselves" the result of this is likely to be more or less prejudicial to the interests of the Church.[5] The university as such pursues liberal knowledge, and liberal knowledge has a tendency to impress upon us a "mere philosophical theory of life and conduct, in the place of Revelation." (165) Newman says that this tendency is "not necessary or rightful" but he seems almost in the same breath to modify the first part of this assurance: liberal knowledge has this very tendency at least when it is pursued "by beings such as we are." (165) How and how far is this tendency avoidable by becoming beings other than we presently are? Truth, Newman says, may be pursued under either of its two attributes—as useful or as beautiful. Were we to pursue truth to its furthest extent as useful or beautiful we would be led to God and Church. But when we pursue the truth as beautiful or useful so far as to satisfy ourselves with what is "visibly or intelligibly excellent"—as we "are likely to do"—we end up by making natural beauty or present

[5] It is at this point that Newman employs the example of the Spanish Inquisition. Newman's point here is that the inclusion of theology to whatever extent in the university will not make the university Catholic "unless the Church breathes her own pure and unearthly spirit into it" but in the case of the Inquisition, as he describes it, the spirit and form of that institution as an institution of Spanish state policy was unaffected by the "faith and zeal and sanctity and charity [that] were to be found from time to time in the individuals who [...] had a share in its administration." (164)

utility our test. Pursued under its attribute of beauty, as it is pursued by a liberal education, the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake leads one to a point where one is ready to alter, or even abandon, the articles of the faith:

> Knowledge, viewed as knowledge, exerts a subtle influence in throwing us back on ourselves, and making us our own centre, and our minds the measure of all things. This then is the tendency of that Liberal Education, of which a University is the school, viz., to view Revealed Religion from an aspect of its own,—to fuse and recast it,—to tune it, as it were, to a different key, and to reset its harmonies,—to circumscribe it by a circle which unwarrantably amputates here, and unduly developes there; and all under the notion, conscious or unconscious, that the human intellect, self-educated and self-supported, is more true and perfect in its ideas and judgments than that of Prophets and Apostles, to whom the sights and sounds of Heaven were immediately conveyed. A sense of propriety, order, consistency, and completeness gives birth to a rebellious stirring against miracle and mystery, against the severe and the terrible. (165)

The very same qualities which enable someone to achieve a philosophic comprehension of the various branches of knowledge dispose him to rebel against those qualities which belong to the faith—miracle and mystery, the severe and the terrible. Moreover, the love of the beautiful which characterizes the notion of liberal knowledge may begin by colliding with the moral teachings of the Church, but it ends by questioning the very notion of faith as such. "This intellectualism," Newman notes, "first and chiefly comes into collision with precept, then with doctrine, then with the very principle of dogmatism;—a perception of the Beautiful becomes the substitute for faith." (165)

A spirit of what Newman now calls "intellectualism" will "freely" evolve out of that very same philosophical condition of mind which Newman had previously extolled—"so highly" as he now acknowledges and "so justly" as he still insists. And it is impossible, he adds, that this spirit will not result in "first indifference, then laxity of belief, then even heresy." (166) In light of the almost inescapable hostility that liberal knowledge exhibits towards the faith, one begins to wonder how theology could possibly function as queen of the sciences. By right theology may be the highest science in relation to all of the others, but in fact it begins to look as if the philosophic way of connecting the several branches of knowledge within the pursuit of the true as beautiful that characterizes liberal education creates a powerful pretender to theology's throne. Indeed, the pursuit of the true as beautiful makes theology's very presence among the several branches of knowledge increasingly questionable at least so long as theology is linked to the "mean and illiberal" content of biblical revelation. (166)

How liberal education threatens the authority of the Church within the university becomes even clearer when we consider more distinctly the two branches of

liberal knowledge other than theology: natural science and literature. Each, Newman shows, presents its own peculiar danger to the faith. If the first injures revealed truth by excluding it from the curriculum, the latter injures it by corrupting its spirit.

Newman explains that there has always been jealousy and hostility between religion and natural science owing to the fact that Catholicism differs from physical science in what he terms "drift, method of proof, and subject matter." If, in the first place, a few natural scientists have remained believers because of their greatness of mind, or religious profession, or fear of public opinion, most have been unbelievers or sceptics and, according to Newman, an "intelligible" justification for this fact has been given by one of them, Lord Bacon. The theologian whose concern is divine omnipotence "simply ignores the laws of nature as existing restraints upon its exercise" while the physical philosopher who aims through his experiments to ascertain those laws puts "aside the question of that omnipotence." (168) Accordingly, natural science is not concerned with investigating final causes or, for that matter, first causes of any kind. And so, as Bacon claims, "physical science is in a certain sense atheistic, for the very reason it is not theology." (169) Deep satisfaction in the laws of nature makes scientists indifferent or sceptical towards the very idea of a divine ruler; the occasional interference of religious authority in the province of science makes its professors "sore, suspicious, and resentful." (169) The method of natural science also tends to breed hostility towards revealed truth. Whereas theology is a deductive science, drawing inferences from the deposit of the faith received once and for all from the Apostles, physical science is inductive, basing all of its conclusions upon experiment and observation. Add to this fact the dazzling success of the inductive method and the natural result produced in the student is scorn for any process of inquiry not founded on experiment. And finally, natural science and the teaching of the Catholic Church differ though they do not actually diverge because the physical world that is of concern to the scientist precedes the introduction into it of moral evil, whereas the Church is "the instrument of a remedial dispensation to meet that introduction." (171) Although the laws of nature give us a sense of God's power, wisdom and goodness, they do not convey a sense of the moral law and the existence of moral evil and are consequently silent regarding God's mercy and the divine economy of salvation. The silence of nature, moreover, "may easily seduce the imagination, though it has no force to persuade the reason, to revolt from doctrines which have not been authenticated by facts, but are enforced by authority." (172)

If science endangers the faith because it "necessarily ignores the idea of moral evil," the other branch of liberal education, literature, poses an even greater

danger, according to Newman, because it understands moral evil "too well." It is after all the science, or history, of natural man in all the multiplicity of his passions, intellect, and creativity; it is to man "what autobiography is to the individual." (173) And it is more than the reflection of a uniformity in human nature, for man is not uniform:

> [...] while Nature physical remains fixed in its laws, Nature moral and social has a will of its own, is self-governed, and never remains any long while in that state from which it started into action. Man will never continue in a mere state of innocence; he is sure to sin, and his literature will be the expression of his sin [...] . (173)

Literature is the fascinating biography of man, at best of natural man, but more often and more dangerously of fallen and rebellious man—and it fascinates us because it is our biography. And there is no alternative to this literature, if literature is to be included at all in the university's curriculum. It is what is to be expected so far as the human life it reflects is portrayed apart from any extraordinary dispensation. It would be impossible or seriously mistaken, Newman argues, to search out and substitute for this literature one that is free of the very character that makes it so dangerous. Impossible, for there cannot be "a sinless Literature of sinful man." (174) If literature is to enable us to study man, it must be the literature that depicts natural and rebellious man exercising his various gifts in the performance of great deeds or "hateful crimes." Seriously mistaken, for this would be to substitute for literature what we see of man regenerate in sacred scripture. And, this would be to show "God's grace and its work" at great disadvantage by comparing the few whom it has "thoroughly influenced" with the many "who have it not or use it ill." (175)

The only alternative to a full exposure of students to this dangerous literature would be to exclude literature altogether, but this Newman says, would be "shirking from our plain duty [...] ." (176) Explaining why it is our plain duty to include the great and dangerous literature that manifests human nature in human language, Newman restates or revises just what the university is—and is not. To educate is to prepare students for this, not the next world. The university is not a convent or a seminary but a place to fit men of the world for the world. So far as the world to come is concerned, it is of no more importance that we improve our intellectual strength than our bodily health. But what then is the importance of the University to the Church, and why is it our duty to expose students in the university established by the Church to the literary remains of fallen man? Newman's answer to this question is that the world will then become the university for our students. To exclude "Homer, Ariosto, Cervantes, Shakespeare," from the education we furnish "because the old Adam smelt rank in them" is to leave our student to be tutored by "the multitudinous blasphemy of his day." (177) The

charm of what is novel and fascinating will still await our student outside the door of the university but he will have been deprived pointlessly of the "honest indulgence of wit and humour" and exposed to that world outside the university without having been prepared to distinguish "beauty from sin, the truth from the sophistry of nature, what is innocent from what is poison." (177)

Newman suggests little in the way of eliminating the collision between revelation and these two branches of liberal education. What Newman does suggest is that the danger presented by both literature and science is to be met not by excluding these secular disciplines, but by gaining the admittance of the Church into the secular schools:

> The Church's true policy is not to aim at the exclusion of Literature from Secular Schools, but at her own admittance into them. Let her do for Literature in one way what she does for Science in another; each has its imperfection, and she has her remedy for each. She fears no knowledge, but she purifies all; she represses no element of our nature, but cultivates the whole. (178)

The remedy that Newman here suggests appears at first to harken back to his argument for the inclusion of theology as the highest science in Discourses II-IV. The difference, however, is that he no longer speaks of theology ruling over the secular sciences, but of the Church *purifying* secular knowledge. Thus Newman concludes his account of the conflict between Catholicism and natural science by insisting that theology be present not to rule over science but to defend itself from the ill-usage it would otherwise receive at the hands of champions of science. [6]

This new image of the presence and actions of the Church within the university seems to become more explicit in the final sections of the Ninth Discourse where Newman likens the proper role of the Church in the university to the work of St. Philip Neri in confronting the dangers of the Renaissance. According to Newman, St. Philip "lived in an age as traitorous to the interests of Catholicism as any that preceded it, or can follow it [...] when a new world of thought and beauty had opened upon the human mind, in the discovery of the treasures of classic literature and art." (178) Newman goes on to compare the discovery of classic literature and art to an enchantress luring "the great and the gifted," "the high and the wise," into an abyss. St. Philip, however, "perceived that the mischief was to be met, not with argument, not with science, not with protests and warnings, not by the recluse or the preacher, but by means of the great counter-fascination of purity and truth." (179) Newman suggests, in other words, that the hostility pre-

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[6] Although Newman observes that by defending itself against science as it intrudes into the domain of theology, theology will also safeguard science against distortion, he says here that this is not as such the Church's concern.

sented by science and literature are to be met not within the curriculum by means of theology as the ruling science, but by the infusion of the other-worldly charms of the Church. Indeed, Newman seems to confirm this suggestion a few lines later when he speaks of St. Philip's mission as the attempt to infuse the sacred into the secular rather than attempting to fight against the secular by means of doctrine and authority:

> He preferred to yield to the stream, and direct the current, which he could not stop, of science, literature, art, and fashion, and to sweeten and to sanctify what God had made very good and man had spoilt. And so he contemplated as the idea of his mission, not the propagation of the faith, nor the exposition of doctrine, nor the catechetical schools; whatever was exact and systematic pleased him not; he put from him monastic rule and authoritative speech, as David refused the armour of his king. No; he would be but an ordinary individual priest as others: and his weapons should be but unaffected humility and unpretending love. (179)

If St. Philip provides the model for how the Church is to combat the hostility to the faith engendered by a liberal education, it would appear that when Newman speaks in his Preface of the need for the Church to guarantee the integrity of the university he is referring not so much to theology as queen of the sciences, but to the pure and unearthly spirit of the Church. By the time we reach the end of the Ninth Discourse it appears that the infusion of the other-worldly spirit of the Church made concrete and animate in the example of St. Philip Neri is needed not so much to supplement the authority of theology as queen of the sciences as it is to combat the almost inescapable hostility of the secular sciences towards revealed truth. The attempt to purify the secular by means of the sacred is a strategy adopted in the wake of theology's inability to successfully govern sciences which, at least for beings such as we are, tend to be hostile to the faith. But what are we to make of the apparent discrepancy between the account of theology as a governing discipline in Discourses II-IV and the much darker account of the relation between a Catholic and a liberal education that emerges in the Ninth Discourse?

Philosophy *versus* Theology

When we look from the vantage point of the Ninth Discourse back upon the argument Newman has developed in his Discourses, we begin to notice features of that argument which prepare us for the dark analysis in this Discourse. While Newman sometimes describes the structure of the sciences hierarchically, in which case theology rules all of the other disciplines, he also frequently speaks of the circle of the sciences, in which case philosophy, or the science of sciences, functions as the governing science. This ambiguity has not gone unnoticed by Newman scholars. Dwight Culler, in *The Imperial Intellect*, notes the ambiguity in Newman's account:

> He employs two different images to describe the structure of knowledge, that of the circle of the sciences and that of the hierarchy of the sciences, and that he makes no attempt to reconcile the two. The former, which is of classical origin, implies that theology occupies one segment of a circle which is presided over by the Science of Sciences, but the latter, which is of medieval origin, implies that she is queen of the sciences and herself has the ruling of all the rest.[7]

Culler resolves this difficulty by making a distinction between two senses of theology. If by theology we refer to the divine matters which are the subject of that science, then theology is "simply supreme [...] and one would naturally employ the image of a hierarchy or the metaphor of a queen."[8] But if by theology we mean the knowledge that we human beings possess of divine matters then theology is necessarily incomplete simply because it is based upon an abstraction. Although a complete knowledge of God—God's own knowledge of Himself and all His works—would necessarily comprehend all things, the incomplete knowledge of God that we human beings possess is based upon an abstraction and is therefore partial or incomplete. Culler concludes, therefore, that the science of theology is unable to function as the queen of the sciences.

There does seem to be textual support for Culler's explanation. Newman points out in his Third Discourse that although the subject matter of the various sciences is ultimately one, the sciences themselves are partial and incomplete because they are based on an abstraction, i.e., they treat this or that aspect of the whole. This also applies to theology:

> Not even Theology itself, though it comes from heaven, though its truths were given once for all at the first, though they are more certain on account of the Giver than those of mathematics, not even Theology, so far as it is relative to us, or is the Science of Religion, do I exclude from the law to which every mental exercise is subject, viz., from that of imperfection, which ever must attend the abstract, when it would determine the concrete. (39)

In order to remedy the defect of each of the particular sciences which stems from their abstract nature, Newman asserts that there must be a science of sciences which comprehends "the bearings of one science on another, and the use of each to each, and the location and limitation and adjustment and due appreciation of them all, one with another." (38) Newman calls this science "philosophy" or "a philosophical habit of mind." As the comprehensive science, philosophy would appear to be the dominant or ruling science since it is more comprehensive than theology. If Culler's interpretation is correct, we can see, in part at least, why

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[7] A. Dwight Culler, *The Imperial Intellect: A Study of Cardinal Newman's Educational Ideal* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), p. 258.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 265.

theology is unable to function as the queen of the sciences and is therefore unable to guarantee the Catholicity of the university.

Theology's abstract nature, however, is not the only factor limiting its ability to function as queen of the sciences that can be detected prior to the Ninth Discourse. Looking back on Newman's argument for the inclusion of theology within the university curriculum we can find several places where Newman clearly anticipates the Ninth Discourse's account of the hostility that secular science has towards theology. We note, in the first place, that the very fact that Newman needs to make an argument for the inclusion of theology among the secular sciences stems from the fact that theology tends to be viewed by the secular sciences with a great deal of scepticism. Those who wish to exclude theology "do not think that any thing is known or can be known for certain, about the origin of the world or the end of man." (20) Theology is viewed not as knowledge, but as mere feeling or sentiment. The hostility of the secular sciences comes into full view as early as Discourse II where Newman addresses those who defend the exclusion of theology on the grounds that natural science is sufficient to establish the belief in the existence of a supreme being. In response Newman points out that the notion of God arrived at by means of natural science tends to be extremely ambiguous: "God" may mean nothing more than what the heathens meant by "Fate," "Chance," or "the Soul of Nature." Indeed, Newman notes that "physical theology"—his term for that theological speculation which is an extension of natural science—is biased against the notion of a particular providence and divine interventions that are miraculous in nature. The God of "physical theology" is a being "who keeps the world in order, who acts in it, but only in the way of general Providence, who acts towards us but only through what are called laws of Nature, who is more certain not to act at all than to act independent of those laws [...] ." (28) Already in the Second Discourse we see the hostility of natural science towards theology. Indeed, Newman's argument for the inclusion of theology within the curriculum presupposes this hostility.

We have seen how the hostility of natural science towards theology is found in Discourses II-IV, but we can also find in this discussion the source of philosophy's tendency to alter or adjust the truths of theology. In this regard it is worth examining Newman's account of the tendency of the various sciences to intrude upon the province of theology. According to Newman, it is the peculiarly human capacity to seize and unite what the senses present that tends to lead the individual sciences to go beyond their proper bounds. The desire to systematize diverse facts and to stamp them with a single form is so strong that we would rather fix upon imaginary causes or illusory syntheses than have none at all. This impatience, however, not only explains why the individual sciences tend to invade the

province of theology. This very same impatience leads philosophy to adjust or recast the truths of theology so that the whole of human knowledge might be comprehended in a single system. The desire to achieve a comprehensive view, then, tends to produce the very intellectualism which is hostile to miracle and mystery. Indeed, the hostility of the secular sciences both taken individually and as a whole becomes clear at one point in Discourse IV where Newman characterizes the impatient, but all too human, desire to achieve a comprehensive view as "private judgment." His choice of words is significant. In an essay entitled "Faith and Private Judgment" Newman has described private judgment as the desire to be one's own master, a mode of thinking which is utterly antithetical to the notion of faith understood as the belief in a divinely instituted authority to whom we must simply owe submission.[9] If theology were able to attain to God's own know ledge of Himself, then theology would be perfect and complete and suffer no threat from the secular sciences. But since for us human beings theology must rely upon faith, the secular sciences, guided by philosophy, cannot help but be hostile to revealed truth. Newman seems to be saying that theology ought to govern the other sciences, but given the fallen creatures we are it will be difficult, nay impossible, for theology to carry out such a task. What is more likely is that theology will be changed or adulterated by the secular sciences rather than the secular sciences purified by theology.

The dominance of philosophy over theology becomes especially evident in Discourses V-VIII when Newman discusses liberal knowledge as an end in itself. In this discussion we hear much about that philosophical habit of mind which consists in an active power of forming and uniting, of digesting what we know and discover. We no longer hear about theology as the comprehensive science and God as the highest object of that science. This is not altogether surprising since if sacred theology were the unifying science, and God the ultimate fact, then liberal knowledge would consist more in the *reception* of authoritative truth conveyed by means of the Apostles, than in reason's power to digest the multitude of facts it knows and discovers. If theology were to function as the queen of the sciences one would describe the unity of all the sciences not as the product of human thinking, but as openness and receptivity towards the Truth, and the following out of what, in itself, is mysterious and unfathomable.[10] In short, New-

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[9] "Faith and Private Judgment" is found in *Discourses Addressed to Mixed Congregations* (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1906), pp. 192-213.

[10] Surprisingly, Newman outlines the notion of the sciences as unified by theology as the awareness of miracle and mystery in the essay "Christianity and Scientific Investigation" which is contained in the volume of essays appended to the *Idea of a University.* (346-347)

man's account of liberal knowledge as the love of truth as beautiful conflicts with the sublime attraction of miracle and mystery which permeates sacred theology when unadulterated by the secular sciences.

We conclude then that Newman does not finally think it possible for theology to successfully alter the circle of secular sciences in a manner which permits it to function as the queen of the sciences. Its inclusion among the circle of the sciences may minimize the extent to which they exceed their competence in the expression of their hostility towards revealed truth, but one cannot rely upon the inclusion of theology to eliminate altogether that hostility to the faith which is inevitable for fallen man at least. Theology must insist upon its admission into the university to argue with science, opposing "reason to reason," but the most it can hope to accomplish in arguing with science is to demand justice from its adversary. And how is it to deal with literature "which does not argue but [...] makes its way by means of gaiety, satire, romance, the beautiful, the pleasurable"? (178) Though the Church might fairly exercise an authority here that would be tyrannical if "reason and fact were the only instruments" employed by literature, Newman has already insisted that literature with all of its dangerous charms should not be excluded from the university. All that can avail in this instance is the model of St. Philip who successfully opposed the charms of the secular arts and sciences by offering in his own person the counter-fascination or purity and truth. How then is the Church to breathe its "pure and unearthly spirit" into the university? It would seem that the Church must encourage a sense of the miraculous and the mysterious. The obvious place to begin is with the sacraments and especially the Mass which contains the ongoing miracle of the Eucharist, and with it the real presence of that God who is at once loving and mysterious and awful.[11]

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[11] Msgr. Robert Sokolowski has recently argued that the virtual collapse of Catholic universities which has taken place in the last thirty years is partly due to the change in the Mass since the Second Vatican Council. "Church Tradition and the Catholic University," *Proceedings of the Eighteenth Convention of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars,* 1995.